

THE
EXCELLENCY
OF
Man's SOUL,

Set out in a SERMON, Preached in
St. MARYS CHURCH,

AT

Gates-Head,

IN THE

COUNTY-PALATINE

OF

DURHAM:

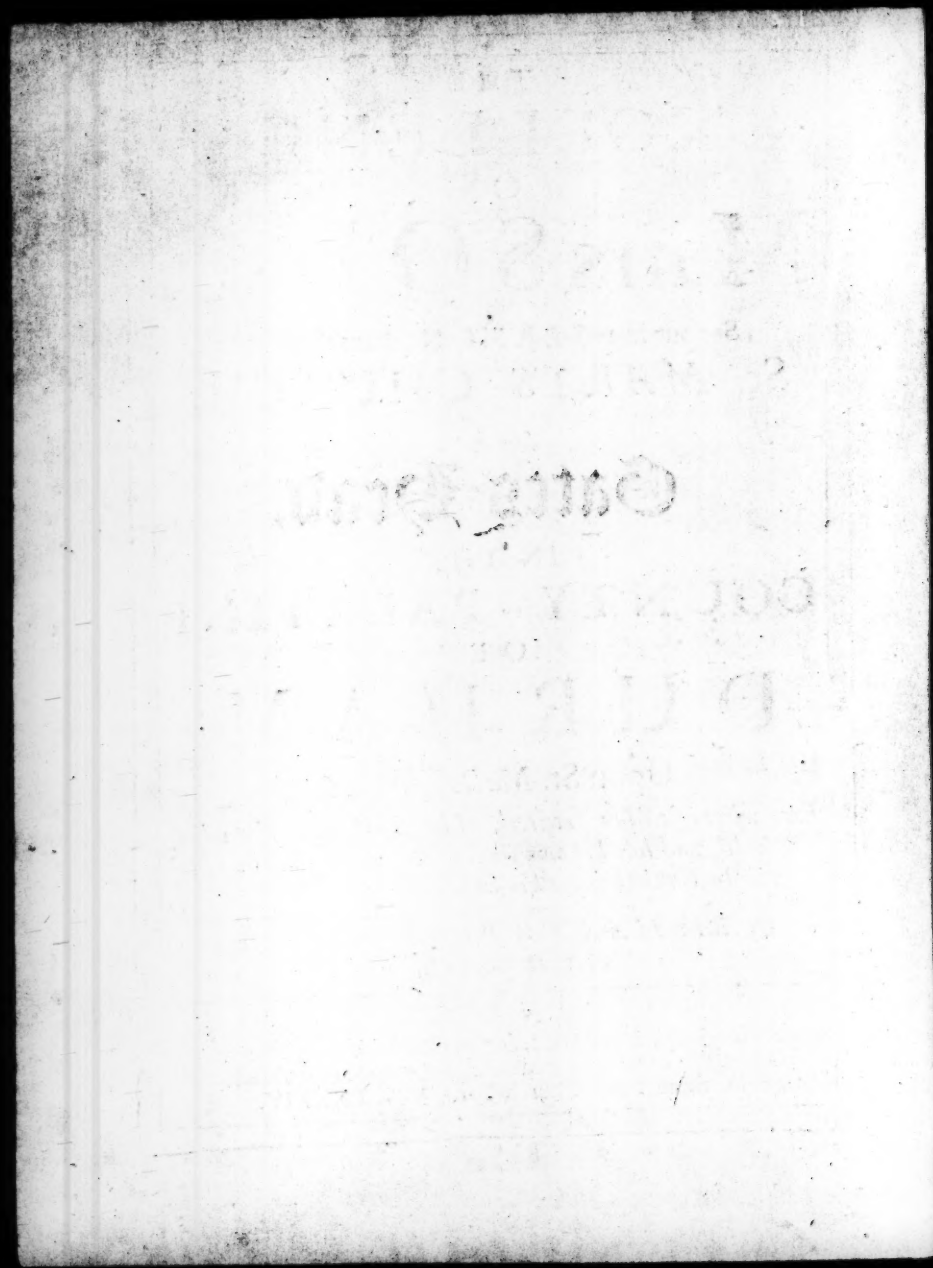
Upon St. Matt. XVI. 26.

*For, what is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole
World, and lose his own Soul? Or, what shall a Man
give in Exchange for his Soul?*

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of that Church.

L O N D O N,

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MATTH. XVI. v. 26.

For, what is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Or, what shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?



He Prediction of the Sufferings of the Disciples of Christ, is declared in the Twenty fourth Verse, by way of Precept; *If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me.*

In the Twenty fifth Verse, this Precept is confirmed by Effects, by way of Antithesis; namely, the destruction of their Souls, who neglect, and slight it; and the Salvation of their Souls, who observe, and obey it.

The first Effect is amplified by opposing the loss of the Soul to the gaining of the whole World; which indeed is an Hyperbole: But yet, there is this Truth in it, That if a Man might gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul, he would be no gainer by it. *For, what is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Or, what shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul?*

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There is something in this Text, that's imply'd; and something that's expressed.

That, that is imply'd, is this; That there is in Man, an inordinate desire, and covetousness (even) after the whole World.

That, that is expressed, is this; That there is an excellency in Man's Soul, above all the things of the World: And that shall be the Subject of the present Discourse.

It was the Opinion of *Crates*, the *Theban*, that there was no Soul in Man; but that the Body was moved by Nature, as it is. I hope there are none in our Days of that Opinion; and therefore, I need not go about to prove, That there is a Soul in Man; it being a Truth generally receiv'd, and acknowledged.

To make an Entrance into the Discourse, I shall speak something about the Nature of Man's Soul.

There are many, and various Philosophical Opinions about the Soul. Some have thought it to be Air: Some have called it Harmony: Some have call'd it Motion; and some Number. Others have imagined it to be a Cœlestial-Fire, that did enlighten, quicken, and warm the Body. These, and other such Opinions there have been, which are needless to be mentioned. Few Definitions of it have been receiv'd without contradiction. *Aristotle* confuted Twelve Definitions that were before him; and when he had done, he could hardly make good his own.

There have been many, and different Opinions about the Soul, among Divines. *Bullinger*, in his Fourth *Decad*, and Tenth Sermon, mentions many of them. Some have thought it to be a Secret unknown to Men: But (I think) I may safely call the Soul, a

Created:

Created-Reasonable Spirit, infus'd into the Body.

I call it a Spirit, because the Scripture calls it so, *Ecclef. c. 12. & v. 7. 1 Cor. 6. & 20.*

I call it a Created-Spirit; to distinguish it from God, who is a Spirit Uncreated; the Fourth of *St. John*, verse the Twenty fourth.

I call it a reasonable Spirit; to distinguish it from the Souls of Brutes, which are also called Spirits, *Ecclef. 3. 21.*

I call it a Spirit infus'd into the Body; to distinguish it from Angels; who are Spirits subsisting without Bodies, *Heb. 1. 7.*

The Soul of Man is a Created-Reasonable Spirit, infus'd into the Body. The Soul is in the Body, not Repletively; for, that belongs to God alone, who fills both Heaven, and Earth: It is not in the Body Circumscriptively; because it is incorporeal: But the Soul is in the Body Definitively, as within its bounds. It seeth by the Eye; it heareth by the Ear; it acts and moves, and works by the Members of the Body, as its Organs, and Instruments: And truly, (in the first place) in this appears the Excellency of Man's Soul.

The Soul, being a Spirit, it is more excellent than the purest of those Elementary, and Etherial-Bodies. The Soul, being a Spirit, it is firm, without Figure, and Lineament: Being a Spirit, it is simple, and not mixed: Being a Spirit, it is not subject to alteration, or corruption in respect of its Essence.

The *Roman* Orator thought, that Man's Soul did not differ from its Maker, but in comparison; and, we may (with an Holy reverence) say, that it doth come near to the Nature of God himself; it being invisible, indivisible, and immortal.

Secondly, The Excellency of Man's Soul appears by its

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its Efficient Cause; and that is, God Himself.

It was the Errour of the *Hermians*, and *Seleucians*, that the Angels made Men's Souls. It is the Opinion of others, that the Soul of Man is generated: But, surely the Soul of Man is not from Angels, by way of Efficiency; nor, is it from Man, by Generation; but from God, by Creation. *Moses* tells us, *Gen. 2.* that God breathed into Man's Nostrils the Breath of Life, and he became a Living Soul. And the Apostle, *Heb. 12. 9.* speaks of God, as being the Father of Spirits.

There is not a Præ-existence of Souls; nor are the Souls of Men Accidental, and Secondary-results, from certain Fortuitous-Concretions, and Contextures of Atoms; but, there is a Successive-Creation of Souls. The Souls of Men have their Original from God, who is ἀγέννητον, Himself unmade; existing from Eternity: Souls, are created by God immediately, and infused in Generation.

The Soul of Man, is not *de Deo*, of God, in his Essence; but it is *à Deo*; from God, in his Power, *Rom. 11. 36.* and so it is God's Off-Spring, (by way of Efficiency;) in a Conformity to Divine-habits in its qualifications; not by an Identity of Divine Substance in its Constitution.

Thirdly, The Excellency of Man's Soul, appears by the price paid for its Redemption.

It is not the Gold of *Arabia*; nor the Rubies of *Ethiopia*; nor the Riches of *India*; nor Thousands of Rams; nor Ten thousands of Rivers of Oyl, that can redeem a Soul: Neither, can the Fruit of the Body make Satisfaction for the Sin of the Soul. The Soul of Man cannot save it self. The Soul of Man is not able to fulfil all Righteousness; nor is it able to bear the Curse of the Law: It is not able to over-

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come the Powers of Darkneſs; nor to ſatisfy Divine Juſtice: Nothing ſhort of the Blood of Chriſt could do this.

Without the Shedding of Blood, there is no remiſſion of ſins, *Heb. 9. v. 22.* There is a double Negative, *Without, No*; and that carries an Emphaſis with it, and it ſignifies this much unto us; That, there is no other way can poſſibly be found out, for the Remiſſion of Sins, but by the Blood of Chriſt. Now, this Blood was the Blood of that Perſon, who was God as well as Man, *Acts 20. 28.* And, in this reſpect, it hath a Divine Worth; an infinite Merit; an infinite Dignity, Virtue, and Efficacy. This Blood, paciſieth infinite Wrath; it ſatiſfieth infinite Juſtice; it procureth infinite Grace. Behold here the value, and worth of Man's Soul, that could be redeemed by nothing ſhort of this Blood: Well might the Apoſtle call this Blood *τιμον ἀίμα*, precious Blood, *1. Pet. 1. 19.* And well may we from hence conclude the Excellency of Man's Soul.

Fourthly, The Excellency of Man's Soul appears by its capacity; and that in a double reſpect.

First, By its capacity in point of underſtanding. The thoughts, and the Heart of Man is deep, *Pſ. 64. 6.*

The Soul of Man, can underſtand things Abſtractively; without the Conſideration of Quantity, Quality, Time, or Place; and ſo can change things into a more immaterial, and intelligible Nature; which is that, that is called Univerſality.

Secondly, By its Capacity, in point of Satisfaction. All the Creatures, rallied up together, cannot ſatisfy the Soul of Man. Some of the Ancients, reckoned up two hundred ways, whereby a Man might be happy: But, if a Man ſhould enjoy all thoſe things, he might be far from Satisfaction.

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There is no Proportion, nor Sutableness between these things, and Man's Soul; and therefore there can be no Satisfaction. from these things, to Man's Soul. These things can no more Satisfy the Soul of Man, than Ashes, or the East Wind can fill the Stomach.

When Men make the World their Portion, and are filled with a desire of a greater measure of Earthly goods (in hope of being satisfied therewith) they are justly, (by God) given up to an endless Covetousness; and are like that Man, who stood by a Rivers side, in hope that all the Water would pass away, that he might go over dry-shod: but, when he had waited a great while, the Water came as fluently as before.

The *Scythian* Ambassadour told *Alexander*, that if he had the Eastern-Empire in the Right-hand, and the Western in the Left, yet, he would not be contented. These things are but *Somnium vigilantium*: They are but waking Mens-dreams: They fill us with Illusions, and vain Forms: These things abuse us, and make us imagine, that we are rich, and full; when (indeed) we are empty, poor and miserable. Nothing but a Blessed, and a blessing-Object; nothing but an Infinite, and an Eternal-God, can satisfie the Soul of Man.

God never put the Virtue of Soul-satisfying into any Creature; he hath reserved this to Himself, as a Divine Prerogative. Nothing can give satisfaction to Souls, but God, in Christ, who made satisfaction for Souls.

Fifthly, God doth more freely communicate Himself to Man's Soul, than to other Creatures.

God, is the Upholder, and Governour of other Creatures; but, he doth not only Uphold, and Govern
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Men's Souls; but he discovers his Favour to them; and he bestows his Grace upon them, and enters into Covenant with them, and he engageth his Attributes for them. He layeth them (as it were) in his Bosom, he teacheth them what they should do, and what they should not do. He hath appointed Prayer, (as a means,) whereby Souls may converse with him, and commune with him; and, in some Cases, command him. They are Gods own Words; concerning the Works of my Hands Command ye me.

God hath discovered himself to Mens Souls, to be a Father, a Saviour, a Fountain, washing, quickening, cooling, healing and refreshing. He relieves the Soul with comforts in time of troubles, and at length, he fills the Soul with joy unspeakable, and full of Glory. God doth not thus discover himself to other Creatures, as to Mans Soul, which sheweth its excellency.

Sixthly, Whensoever the Saints of God, (in an especial manner) would praise God, they have (in an especial manner,) engaged their Souls in this duty. *Bless the Lord, O my Soul*, said David three times in one Psalm; Psalm 103. 1, 2, 22. *Bless the Lord, O my Soul*, Psalm. 104. 1. *Praise the Lord, O my Soul*, Psalm. 146. 1. *My Soul doth Magnifie the Lord*, said Mary, Luke. 1. 46, 47.

God requires the Heart; *My Son, give me thy Heart*, that is, the Soul. He requires that Men should Seek him, and Serve him, and Worship him, and Honour and Praise him with the Heart, that is, with the Soul: And the Saints of God have given God their Souls, as being their better part. Remarkable (in this respect) are those Soliloquies of *Augustine*, *Bernard*, *Gerard*, and Bishop *Hall*, which were secret conferences between God, and their Souls.

B *Seventhly*,

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Seventhly, The excellency of the Soul appears by this, That Men have most complained of the Troubles of their Souls. There was such an Anguish in the Spirits of the Israelites, that they hearkned not to the voice of *Moses*, *Exodus* the 6th and the 9th. Surely their outward trouble was great, being in a strange Land, in an Estate of Bondage, and under hard Taskmasters; but the anguish of their Spirits is mentioned, as being the greatest. *O wretched Man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this Body of Death?* said *Paul*. *Paul* suffered many things in his Body, Stripes, Bonds, Imprisonment; he complains not so much at this; but when he considered how his Soul was troubled with sin, then he cryed out, *O wretched Man that I am!* &c. Now, what is the reason that the troubles of the Soul are so grievous, but this? That the Soul is so quick and lively, as being the Fountain of sense.

Eighthly, The care that Gods People have had about their Souls is an Argument of their excellency.

They have had an honest care to provide Food and Rayment for their Bodies in their life time, they have taken care for a decent and an honourable Burial of their Bodies. Thus did *Abraham*, and thus did *Joseph*; he gave Commandment concerning the carrying of his Bones out of *Egypt*; but much more have they been solicitous concerning their Souls. How careful was *Stephen*, to commend his Soul to God, in the time of his sufferings? *Lord Jesus receive my Spirit*. *David* Prayed frequently and heartily for his Soul; *Deliver my Soul from the Sword: my Darling from the power of the Dog; say unto my Soul, thou art my Salvation.*

How have the People of God waited upon Ordinances? How have they given themselves to Prayer? How have they embraced Martyrdom? How have they

they opposed Satan? How have they laboured after Grace? How have they mortified Sin? How have they performed Duties? How have they endeavoured to hold the mystery of Faith in a pure Conscience? How have they endeavoured to have a Conscience void of Offence towards God and Men? How have they denied themselves, in things pleasing to the Flesh? How have they endeavoured to know God, and obey God, and to be serviceable to Men? And they have done all this, that it might go well with their Souls.

Ninthly, The Malice of the Devil against Mens Souls argues the Excellency of them. The Devil (in regard of his subtilty) is called a Serpent; (in regard of his strength) a Lion; (in regard of his Venom) a Dragon; and he makes use of all to poison, deceive, and devour Souls.

He sometimes tempts to sin, that he may thereby War against the Soul, he sometimes tempts Men to slight the Word of God, and the Ordinances of God. He hath many wiles, and methods, and he useth all; he leaves no Stone unturn'd, nor means unattempted by which he might ensnare, and destroy Souls.

The Devil attempted the destruction of Christ by the means of *Herod*, and he tempted Christ to destroy himself, that thereby he might have hindred the Salvation of Souls.

When Christ came to cast out the Devil out of one that was possessed, he asked him his name, and he answered him thus; *My name is Legion*, Mark 5. 9. as if the Devil should have said, there are so many of us in this Man, that there is no name competible to us, unless that of a Legion; which was the name of Regiment, consisting of Six thousand Souldiers among the Romans. Alas, one Devil being permitted, might have

been Instrumental to have destroyed a Legion of Souls, and yet there were a Legion of Devils met together to seek the destruction of one Soul!

Such is the Malice of the Devil towards man, that he accounts Mens Salvation a Torment to himself, and destruction to himself. *Art thou come to torment us before the time?* Matt. 8. 29. *Art thou come to destroy us?* St. Luke 4. 34. We must note, that when our Blessed Saviour bestowed a Mercy upon the Body of a Man, he did usually bestow Grace upon the Soul of that Man. Now when the Devils perceived this, they cryed out, *Art thou come to torment us? Art thou come to destroy us?* So that the Devil accounts Mans Salvation a Torment to himself, and Destruction to himself.

Tenthly, The Excellency of the Soul appears by its Immortality.

The Immortality of the Soul, hath been acknowledged and owned (even) by *Heathens*, who had thoughts of an *Elysium*, and *Tartarus*, wherein they thought, that the Souls of some were blessed after this Life, and some were miserable. The Poet acknowledged it. *Morte caret anima*—The *Egyptians*, and the British *Druids* acknowledged the same. This Truth hath been acknowledged by Philosophers; by the *Romans*, and by the *Caldeans* especially, whose opinion it was, that the Souls of Men were tempered in the same Morter with the Heavenly Spirits. This was the reason of that Ancient form of Benediction, used among the *Jews*; when the Priest mentioned the name of God in the Sanctuary, then the People did use this form of Benediction: *Blessed be the name of his Glorious Kingdom, from Age, to Age*. A great while they said only from *Age*, but when the Sect of the *Sadduces* arose, who

who (by denying the Resurrection of the Body, and the Immortality of the Soul) affirmed only one Age; then in opposition to that Sect, they added to Age, from Age to Age.

Indeed the Scripture saith, *That the Soul that sinneth shall Die.* Sin is the death of the Soul Morally, but not Physically and Naturally. The Soul by sin hath lost its relative Life, that it had in relation to God in Innocency; but not its absolute Life: Notwithstanding that Death that is contracted upon the Soul by sin, still it remains a Spiritual substance, having a beginning without end. Though the Soul be spoiled of its Spiritual Habits, yet it remains whole in its Natural Essence, and in its Natural Acts.

The Soul of Man is an Heavenly-born-Spirit. It is regenerated by an Immortal Seed, 1 Pet. 1. 4. It is nourished by an Incorruptible Food, John 6. 51. It is capable of an Eternal Punishment, or an Eternal Reward, Mark 9. 43. 2 Cor. 5. 1. The Rich Man died, and in Hell he lift up his Eyes, being in Torment; and the Beggar died, and was carryed (by the Angels) into Abrahams bosom, Luke 16. 22. The Souls of wicked Men, after the death of their Bodies, are in Misery; but the Souls of Saints go to Glory. Their Bodies (for a time) stay behind, and are laid up in the dust, but their Souls take a quick and straight flight to Heaven, and there they continue forever, in a Sparkling, and in a Glorious condition. And indeed if the Soul of Man were Mortal, then the Justice of God would be disparaged, that wicked Men should now flourish, and that the Godly should suffer hardship.

If the Soul of Man were Mortal, then the Covenant of Grace would not be everlasting. If the Soul of Man

Man were Mortal, then those Scriptures that affirm the Immortality of it, would be Fabulous; then the calling of the Ministry would be useless; then the Faith and hope of Christians would be fruitless; then their waiting upon Ordinances, and their performance of Religious duties would be vain.

Augustine professed, that if he were perswaded that the Soul of Man were Mortal, he would (of all Sects) be an Epicure, he would Eat, and Drink, and be Merry, and Delight himself: And indeed why should Men deny themselves sensual pleasures? And why should they Mortifie sin, and obey God in duties of Piety, and Honesty, if they did not believe the Immortality of the Soul?

Eleventhly, The Excellency of the Soul, appears by the greatness of the reward that is prepared for it.

There are Crowns, and Thrones laid up for the Soul in Heaven: There is Glory and Happiness treasured up in Heaven for the Soul; such as no Tongue can express it. It is a blessed thing to be among the Angels, Principalities and Powers, Dominions, Thrones, and Virtues, those several Orders of Angels, that *Aquinas* mentions.

It is a blessed thing to be in the Congregation of the first-born, to be among those Patriarchs, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, to be among the Prophets, and Apostles, and the Noble Army of Martyrs: but besides this, the Souls of the Saints, shall enjoy God for ever. Now this is a thing so great, as Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor hath it entred into the Heart of Man throughly to conceive.

And now do you think, that there is any thing can be given in Exchange for the Soul, that is thus excellent in these many respects? If we should rally up all those

those things, that are so much looked at in the World, we shall find them all short of the Excellency of the Soul.

Honour is a thing much looked at in the World, but what is this in comparison of the excellency of Mans Soul? It is true, that Honour is a gift of God, 1 Chron. 29. 12. And it is promised as a blessing, 1 Sam. 2. 30. But as it is one of the Worlds allurements, it is Vanity; and in reference to Spiritual things, it is Vanity; and in reference to good things (which are thereby hindered) it is Vanity; and in reference to the evils (which are thereby occasioned, as Men disdaining others, and forgetting themselves) it is worse then Vanity; and in this respect contemned by Christians; that so, it may go well with their Souls. Moses refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter. Daniel refused Honours, when they were offered to him by a mighty Monarch, Dan. 5. 17.

Hormisdas, a Noble-man in Persia, slighted his Honours, and his Offices, for Christs sake; that so it might go well with his Soul. *'Si propter ista me denegaturum Christum putas, ista denuò accipe:* Said he to the King, If you think that I will deny Christ, to keep my Honours, and Offices; then take them again.

The Noble-men, among the Heathenish Romans, did wear an Ornament in the form of a Moon, and that upon their Shoë, to shew their low esteem of Worldly Honours; and their opinion about the mutability of it. Much more should Christians undervalue it, in comparison of their Souls.

And, What are the Riches of the World in comparison of the Excellency of Mans Soul? Corrupt Riches, James 5. 2. Uncertain Riches, 1 Tim. 6. 17. The Gospel brands him for a Fool; who expected rest to his

his Soul from his great Possessions; and full Barns; *Luke 12. 20.* There is much vexation in getting Riches; there is much care in keeping them; there is much fear of losing them; and much trouble in parting with them.

Riches (at the best) cannot satisfy the Soul, *Ezek. 7. 19.* Nor, can they profit in the day of Wrath, *Prov. 11. 4.* *Blesbazzar's* Treasure, did him no good, when the Palm of a Mans hand was writing his Doom upon the Wall. The Rich-mans full Possessions and great Barns did him no good, in that night, when his Soul was to be taken from him. And what are the relations of Parents, Husbands, Wives, Children, and Kindred in comparison of the Soul? They are all to be neglected, and slighted, in comparison of the Soul, and as they stand in opposition to the Soul.

James and *John* left their Father *Zebedee* in the Ship, that they might follow Christ, for the Salvation of the Soul, *Mark 1. 20.* How willingly have the Saints and Martyrs passed by their Wives, and Children, and embraced the Instruments of Death, that so their Souls might be Glorified?

It was a good speech of *Kilian*, the Dutch School-master, when he was in Prison for the cause of Christ. One asked him, whether he loved his Wife, and Children; 'Yea said he, my Wife, and Children are so dear to me, that if the World were all Gold, and were mine to dispose of, I would give it to live with them; yea though in a Prison: Yet my Soul, and Christ, are dearer to me than all.

And what are the delights, and pleasures of the World in comparison of the Soul? What are stately Buildings, curious Gardens, Orchards, and Vine-yards, Singing-men and Women, Musical-Instruments, Ex-

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cessive eating, and drinking, and lascivious practices? What are all these things? They are (indeed) the delights and pleasures of the Flesh; but they are nothing in comparison of the Soul. They are vain, transitory, and passing away. Like Pageants, which whilst they please us, pass away from us: Like running banquets which are served in, in state; but are soon over.

Some have observed that the names of the three Sons of Adam were all mysterious. *First, Cain* a Possession; an Emblem of the first Creation. *Secondly, Abel* Vanity; an Emblem of the World since the fall. *Thirdly, Seth* a replantation, or a re-placing of a new Creation by Jesus Christ. Now that, that I observe in this case, is the signification of *Abels* name, (who was the Emblem of the World since Mans fall.) His name signifies Vanity. And surely, since Mans fall the World is a Mass of Vanities and mutabilities.

Vanity of Vanities, saith the Preacher, Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity, Eccl. 1. 2. He who was the Preacher, who knew well what he said, (after a large experience of the World,) declared all things to be Vanity; of a vanishing nature, and liable to decay. The things of the World are as Ice, which will melt with handling. Every Man, every State, every thing is as a Planet, whose spherical revolutions are some of longer, and some of shorter continuance. *The World passeth away, 1 John 2. 17.* The Soul of Man, (in comparison of Worldly things) is more than as the Shekel of the Sanctuary, which was double to the ordinary Shekel: It is more then as a Pearl, in comparison of the Earth. It is more than as the Sun among the Stars.

The Soul doth far exceed the things of the World in nature, and in continuance.

In Nature, as being a Spiritual substance.

In Continuance, as having a beginning without end.

When we consider the excellency of Mans Soul, in these many respects; it is no wonder that some great ones of the World have been such lovers of the Scriptures, which are given to instruct Men in the way of Salvation of their Souls.

Theodosius the Emperour, wrote out the whole New-Testament with his own hand, accounting it a great Jewel, and reading part of it every day. *Robert King of Sicily*, was so wonderfully affected with the Scriptures, that speaking to *Petrarcha*, he said thus; '*Juro tibi Petrarcha multo chariores mihi esse literas, quàm regnum; Et si alterutro mihi sit carendum, æquanimiùs me diademate, quàm literis cariturum.* I swear to thee O *Petrarcha*, that the Scriptures are more dear to me than my Kingdom; and if it were so, that I must needs want one, I had rather want my Crown than the Scriptures.

It is the Excellency of the Soul, that hath induced some of the great ones of the World to become Clergy-men. *John a Lasco* a Noble-Man in *Polonia*; *George Prince of Heinalte*; *Ambrose Lieutenant*, and Consul of *Millan*; *Martinengus*, an Italian Earl; *Chrysostome*, a Noble-Man in *Antioch*; *Henry de Blois*, Brother to King *Stephen*, Bishop of *Winchester*; *Geofrey Plantagenet*, Son to *Henry the second*, Bishop of *Lincoln*; *Ethelwolph*, Son to King *Egbert*, Bishop of *Winchester*: These, and some others of a Noble extract in our days, have esteemed it an addition to their outward Honours in the World, that they have been employed (as Spiritual-Officers in the Church) for the Salvation of Souls.

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Yet more, It is in regard of the Souls Excellency, that Men, both Saints and Heathens, have used such Expressions about it. The Wise Man called it the Candle of the Lord, *Prov. 20. 27.* David called it his Glory. *Awake my Glory.* Pliny calls it the darling of Nature. Plato calls it *ἄνιμα δαυμάτων*, the Wonder of Wonders. Indeed the Soul of Man is so precious, as that God alone who made it, and Christ who redeem'd it, can sufficiently prize it.

First Instruct. Hence we learn the transcendent Excellency of God. Our God hath raised our Souls to such an height of Excellency. How great (then) is the Excellency of that God, who hath formed, and framed such beings of nothing? We admire an Artificer that makes a curious work, though he have matter to work upon, and Instruments to work with. How (then) should we admire the power, the beauty, and excellency of that God, who hath made Mens Souls, such Excellent Creatures, of no præexistent matter? O surely, the Beauty, the brightness, and the Glory of God is such, that it is infinite, incomprehensible, and unutterable, even by the tongues of Angels!

Second Instruction. This informs us of the dignity of the calling of the Ministry, whose Office and work it is to watch for Souls. *Heb. 13. 17.* Their calling (in this respect) is venerable. Civil Magistrates are to maintain outward Peace. Judges and other Officers in the Law, are to maintain Mens outward rights to their Lands and Goods. Physicians are for the preserving of the Health of the Body: But the calling of Ministers is for the present Edification, and future Salvation of Souls. Though Ministers (in respect of their persons) are like other Men, subject to passions and infirmities; yet, their Office is venerable, and their Function is Honourable

in this respect; That they are appointed for the good of Souls. Their dignity lies in this; That they are to endeavour after the welfare of Souls, which are more precious than the whole World; which are purchased at a dear rate, which will hereafter, be for ever warbled in the Quires of Spirits. And therefore Ministers should walk suitable to their calling.

It was the Advice of *Pythagoras* to the Princes of his time. *Principatum quem geritis ornavate*. Adorn that Government which you have undertaken. So Ministers should adorn that Function which they have undertaken. Ministers should be burning and shining-Lights; not only shining in respect of knowledge; but burning in respect of Zeal. Ministers should be not only Trees of knowledge; but Trees of Life. Like *Athanasius*, who made use of his speculation, as a guide of his Conversation; and his Conversation, as a Seal of his speculation.

Ministers who take upon them the charge of Souls, should be as the major Proposition in a Syllogism; that so their People, like the Conclusion may follow the Præmisses of their Presidents. Ministers should be ambulatory Libraries. They should be living-Decalogues, and should be able truly to say: *Nos non eloquimur magna, sed vivimus*. We do not only speak great things, but live them. Like *Paul*, who was an Heavenly-Man, and an Earthly-Angel. This would be a means to regain and uphold the dignity of that calling, which in itself is so Honourable: And this is That, that the Excellency of the Soul calls for.

Third Instruction. From this that hath been said, we learn how unlike Men are to themselves. They have within them precious and immortal-Spirits; and yet they live like the Beasts that perish. This was That, that *Plato* called, *Fredam animarum incorporationem*, in

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regard that Men are become Brutish, and sensual like Beasts. They have fleshly minds, *Col. 2. 18.* Fleshly desires, *Ephes. 2. 3.* They have within them concupiscence and lusts, *2 Pet. 2. 18.* They walk after the Flesh, *Rom. 8. 1.* They are compared to wild Asses, to Dogs and Swine, *2 Pet. 2. 22.* There are many who make it their work and business, to get food and raiment; food for their belly, raiment for their back: Thus they make provision for the Flesh; as if they were all Body, and had no Soul to care for.

4th. Exhort. Be you established in the knowledge of this Doctrine about the Soul.

There are some who are ignorant of it; there be others who are in doubts about it: But do you know that your Souls are Spiritual Substances; created and infused by God; capable of Grace and Glory? A right knowledge of this will be of singular use to you; it will be for your comfort and advantage in respect of Grace, & in respect of obedience, and in respect of perseverance.

5th. Exhort. Let the consideration of the Excellency of your Souls give a check to you, when you go about any base and Sinful practices.

It was the usual speech of *Cæsar* to Himself, when he went about a base Action, *Cogita te esse Cæsarem.* Remember that thou art *Cæsar.* And so when you are going about any base-sinful-actions, do you check yourselves with the thoughts of your Souls; which are (indeed) so invaluable, and whose loss is so irrecoverable, as that the whole World would not be a sufficient recompence for them. Sin is nothing (say the School-men) as having only a privative being: and many of us make it to be nothing in our practice. We make it as nothing by our light thoughts about it. But though Sin be nothing, as having only a privative being; yet let

let me tell you, when you are going to commit Sin, you are warring against your own Souls. Whilst you are acting Sin, you are adding a sting to Death, and torments to Hell. By yielding to Temptations and unto Sin, you yield your selves, and betray your precious Souls to him who is a Murderer. When you are going to Act Sin, you go about to contract Guilt upon your Conscience. You thereby abase and vilify your Souls. You thereby lay a stain and a pollution upon your Souls. You thereby go about to make your selves Guilty of Self-Murder and Soul-Murder.

O therefore, that you would thus expostulate with your selves, when you are going about to commit any Sinful-Act! Shall we commit this Sin? Shall we hereby dishonour God? Shall we hereby gratify Satan? Shall we hereby be cruel to our own precious Souls? Shall we stabbour selves to the Heart? Shall we be Guilty of the Murder of Souls, even of our own Souls? Shall we by delighting in Sin, take pleasure in our own destruction? You are apt to avoid any thing that is hurtful to your Bodies; and will you not avoid Sin that will hurt your Souls? Me thinks that such considerations should divert you from the pursuit and practice of Sin. The Scripture tells us, and experience teacheth us, that no Man hates his own Flesh; and will you by your love to Sin, and delight in Sin, manifest an hatred against your own Souls?

6th Exhort. Make provision for your Souls for the future. Let not your condition when you come to Die be like his, who, when he was dying cried out. *'Anima-
' la vagula, blandula, quæ nunc abibis in loca? O my sweet,
' wandering Soul, into what places art thou now going?* Nor like the condition of that Florentine Physician, who when he was dying cried out, *Mox sciam an anima sit*
im-

immortalis necne. Leave not your precious Souls at such uncertainties. You have many opportunities to do your Souls good ; do not you neglect, nor mispend them. You have many helps, and means and ordinances of Grace offered you : O let not your Souls (in the midst of all these) be like the sluggard's Field that had no Fruit in it ; nor like the Cypress, which, the more it is watered, the more barren it is.

Your Souls are your prime Essential-part ; do you shew your high esteem of them, and your Faithfulness to them in promoting their good ; in doing all things, and using all means that may be for their profit and advantage. Read the Scriptures diligently, which are appointed for the Instruction, the Reproof, Correction, Comfort, and Salvation of your Souls. Be much in Prayer : Hereby your Souls take a flight to Heaven, and may converse and commune with God. Hereby your mourning as Doves, is changed into mounting up as Eagles ; in sweet enlargements and ravishments of Spirit. Hereby the sincere desires of your Souls, and the Holy purposes of your Hearts (through Christ) are made acceptable to God, being Offered up before the Mercy-Seat, the Throne of Grace.

Live above the World. The Woman in the Revelation (by whom is meant the Church) had the Moon, that is the World under her Feet. And truly, while your Hearts are full of Worldly thoughts, they are like *Bethlehems-Inn*, that was so full of Guests, that there was no room for Christ. It will be a thing of singular use, and advantage to you in your Christian course, to get your Souls above the pleasures and possessions of the World. Meditate about the Attributes of God, the Wisdom, Power, Faithfulness, and Mercy of God ; all which stand engaged for the good of Souls.

Be

The Excellency, &c.

Be much in meditation about the Glory of Heaven; in the Fruition whereof, your Souls will be for ever Blessed; And while you are here on Earth, sing Praises to God in his Holy-place; and let it be accompanied with a Sweet and Harmonious consent, produced from the variety of Sounds. This is a thing much commended by Saint *Augustine* and others: and indeed it is an Angelical Office; it is a taste of Heaven, while we are on Earth.

Let the Excellency of your Souls, provoke you to Duties. Let this quicken you to the profession of Religion; and to the Exercise of Religion. Let this persuade you to look to your Hearts and Lives. Let this persuade you to look to the internals of Religion, and to the External Acts of Gods Worship. Whilst others are idle, and careless, and negligent in the great business of Salvation, and think their Souls not worth the labouring for; do you Labour after the Sealing and Testimony of the Spirit; that so your Souls may be Saved. Do you endeavour to feed, refresh, and delight your Souls; and to provide for them now, that it may go well with them hereafter. *Amen.*

F I N I S.